Encroachment of forest land

†336. SHRI SURENDRALATH:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been alarming increase in the cases of encroachment of forest land in the country;

(b) if so, the details of percentage/area of forest land encroached, State-wise alongwith the steps taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether certain laws permit the use of forest land for other purpose also;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is a need to amend the existing laws in order to check encroachments; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) As per information received from various States/Union Territories (UTs) as on 31.03.2004, about 13.43 lakh hectare of forest land in the country is under encroachments. The State-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement (See below) Encroachment on forest land is an offence under Section 26 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and, therefore, it is required to be evicted. However, in September 1990, Central Government issued guidelines under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 which enabled Central Government and the State/UT Governments to regularize pre-1980 eligible encroachments as a one time dispensation with the condition that all post-1980 encroaches will be evicted. However, on Supreme Court's order, Central Government on 3rd May 2002, directed all the State/UT Governments to evict the ineligible encroachers from forest lands in a time bound manner. As per reports received from various States/UTs, encroachments have been cleared from about 1.52 lakh hectare of forest land.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) Regulated use of forest land for non-forestry purposes is permitted under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for development projects like power generation (hydro-power, thermal, gas, and wind), irrigation, construction of roads, railway lines, transmission lines, drinking water supply projects, village electricity, schools, hospitals and mining etc. To mitigate the ill effects arising out of such diversion, compensatory afforestation and other necessary measures are taken up at the project cost.

(e) and (f) No, Sir. The existing provisions under Indian Forest Act, 1927, and the State Forest Acts for the time being in force, are adequate to deal with the problems of encroachment on forest lands.

Statement

Existing encroachments on forest lands in the country

(Data as on 31-3-2004)

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	Existing encroachments (pre-1980 and post-1980 both) on forest lands (area in hectare)
1	2	3
1	Andhra Pradesh	295383.000
2	Assam	299710.000
3	Arunachal Pradesh	3887.810
4	A&N Island	2057.490
5	Bihar	251.869
6	Chandigarh	0.000
7	Chhattisgarh	150495.000
8	Delhi	0.000
9	Daman & Diu	87.960
10	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	614.350
11	Gujarat	22139.540

1	2	3
12	Goa	1012.000
13	Haryana	1274.060
14	Himachal Pradesh	2841.875
15	J&K	9284.000
16	Jharkhand	48438.410
17	Karnataka	67710.000
18	Kerala	7290.000
19	Lakshdweep	0.000
20	Maharashtra	79641.730
21	Manipur	533.240
22	Meghalaya	6584.490
23	Madhya Pradesh	138110.585
24	Mizoram	18759.616
25	Nagaland	0.000
26	Orissa	42605.530
27	Punjab	6812.806
28	Pondicherry	0.000
29	Rajasthan	6712.742
30	Sikkim	3499.640
31	Tamil Nadu	17555.564
32	Tripura	59336.150
33	Uttaranchal	9668.000
34	Uttar Pradesh	27214.630
35	West Bengal	13834.536
	TOTAL:	1343346.622